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Sheridan Coliseum: Newspaper, Sod Broken for Coliseum Twenty-five Years Ago

State College Leader

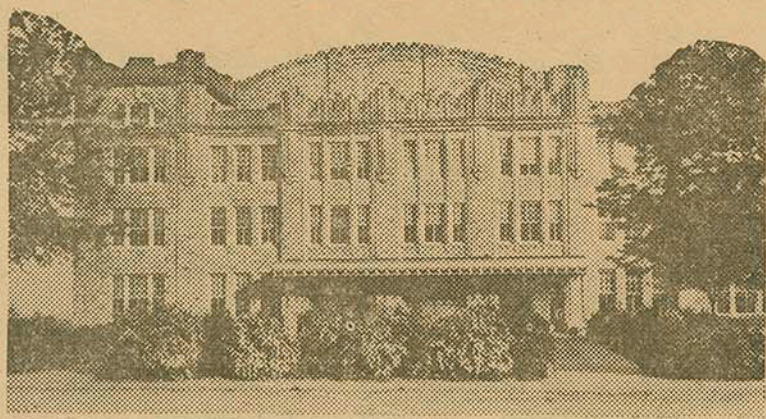
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Sod Broken for Coliseum Twenty-five Years Ago



Twenty-five years ago two days after tomorrow, March 30, at 10 o'clock in the morning, the student body and faculty members gathered on a piece of unbroken ground south of Picken hall. There the president of the senior class, Walter E. Scott, presented a spade to the president of the student body, Lew Wallace, who made the first break in the virgin sod. After the first spadefull of dirt was turned, the Fort Hays hymn was sung.

This simple ceremony symbolized the nearing realization of the \$100,000 dream of President Lewis, seconded by others, for a coliseum to be named in honor of General Sheridan, commandant at the old Fort Hays in the early days.

The structure was to be 155 by 255 feet and three stories high. It was to be made of native yellow limestone and reenforced concrete; and it was to contain an arena with a seating capacity of 3,500. Modern features emphasized were so that the structure would be absolutely fireproof; that inclined planes would eliminate all steps; and that in the summer the auditorium and gymnasium would be cooled by air fanned through chilled water.

Floor Removable

The Coliseum was to be a versatile building. The maple floor of the arena was made in sections so that it could be removed, and the arena could be changed from an auditorium to a pit for a horse show or floor for exhibi-

tion purposes in connection with the fair. (However, the floor has never yet been removed.)

All the noise of the campus was to be concentrated in the Coliseum. As well as serving as the main auditorium, the gymnasium for men and women, showers and swimming pool, it was to contain the music department, blacksmithing, farm carpentry, gas and steam engines, manual training and engineering.

From time to time it has housed many departments, including agriculture, biology, physics, public-school art, and auto mechanics. The YMCA room and a pipe organ were located in the Coliseum at one time. At present the Administration offices, the Extension division, the printing office, and the health department are located here, in addition to the music department and physical education classes.

Dorm for ROTC

During the World war the Coliseum perhaps performed its most unusual service. At that time it was changed into a dormitory for the R.O.T.C., and cots were placed around the top of the arena.

The Coliseum has echoed the shouts of victory, and has seen the disappointment of defeat. It has witnessed the solemnity of Commencements. It has thrilled to such musicians as Rosa Ponselle, Madame Schumann-Heinke, Paul Whiteman, and Sousa's Marine band.

State College Leader
March 27, 1941